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## THE JEWISH REFORMATION.

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I HAVE been asked to inform the readers of this JOURNAL regarding "the new phase of Judaism into which the reform movement tries to cast the ancient faith." In complying I would first say that the word "new" in this connection is not to be understood in the sense of recent, novel, or untried; for the movement began a century and a half ago, and has continued, with varying fortunes, ever since. New it can be called only in so far as it is a departure from the ceremonials and standards of the old faith. In just the same way the Christian Bible, despite its age, is still called "the New Testament," only to distinguish it from the Hebrew Scriptures; it would be more correct to use "the *Older Testament*," since both collections are recognized by the church as "Testaments."

The reform movement first began to take shape with Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), though the "sage of Berlin" never contemplated a remodeling of the faith to the extent to which it has been carried in our day. He lived and died an orthodox Jew, and desired to be known to the world as one walking according to the rabbinical ordinances. He was the lifelong friend of Lessing, Germany's master-mind of that day, who has immortalized him in *Nathan der Weise*, and has made him the bearer of his glorious gospel of toleration. He remained a Jew of the Jews, and lived and died as such. But he was also the author of *Phaëdon* (1767), of *Morgenstunden* (1785), of works on German literature, and the translator into classic German of the Pentateuch and the Psalms; the latter being the two most important books for the Jewish service. By this happy combination of fidelity to faith and tradition with appreciation of the intellectual and artistic life of his own day, Mendelssohn brought to his people the message of "culture." This was the one thing needful for their redemption from the disfigurements

which their long and desperate struggle for existence had wrought in their speech, in their manners, in their worship, in their frame of mind and their attitude toward their surroundings. The wisdom of his counsel, the gentleness of his bearing, the purity of his character, and his standing in the world of letters drew to his side all Jews who, like him, greeted the dawn of the new day which seemed to break for the downtrodden race in the general awakening of the German mind. That he also aroused the opposition of that much larger class which saw safety only in an unbending adherence, even in its smallest details, to the faith as it had been delivered unto the fathers, and which denounced the Berlin philosopher as a dangerous innovator, is a reaction known to all churches and of everyday occurrence in our own time. Yet when Mendelssohn died all felt and confessed that a great light had set in Israel. Witness this extract from the *Vossische Zeitung* of January 10, 1768, quoted by Professor Geiger in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* of August 30, 1900:

The bier was not carried by hirelings, but by his most intimate friends, the noblest and most cultivated of his people; the whole congregation, with the exception of very few, followed the remains; and during the whole time that the funeral lasted all trade and work were suspended among the Jews, and their stores were closed. Some strangers who had come to Berlin solely for the purpose of seeing the great man and speaking with him, but for whom he had passed away too soon, made their way into the chapel where the remains were being prepared for final interment, so that they might view his body and shed tears on the lips and hands from which had emanated so much goodness and wisdom.

The record of the movement that Mendelssohn inaugurated is one of fruitful mental and literary activity. Its ideas are expressed in forms of worship which, deeply rooted in the ancient soil, have in their present adaptation endeared themselves, more especially in this country, to three generations of educated Israelites. It has kept within the fold, or led back to it, many who were on the point of losing their true selves in the inanity of agnosticism. It has breathed new life into a number of old customs which are well worthy of preservation, but which were falling into desuetude because their traditional form was ungainly and had become overgrown with ceremonies that

appealed neither to the heart nor to the mind of the worshiper. In their modern garb they are sources of strength and comfort to many a brave burden-bearer in our midst. And the movement has lasted long enough to have its leadership transferred from the country of its birth to the New World ; but of this later on.

For all that, the question submitted is appropriate and welcome. If we have reason to be thankful for what has been achieved, we recognize the fact that much—and to my mind the more difficult part of the task—still remains to be done. For it is characteristic of the Jewish reformation that at no time has it claimed to be final and conclusive. The movement is to remain a movement ; it has not ended in the substitution of a new orthodoxy for the old one—that fatal error which has strewn the earth with sects and sects of sects. The present leaders of this movement do not intend, now that the fruits of their labors are assured beyond all peradventure, to fold their arms and lay the flattering unction to their souls that they have saved Judaism. Vital problems are still before us which require for their successful solution all the wisdom, all the patience, all the moderation that we can bring to bear upon this task.

And who can tell the new and unforeseen tasks the future hides ? The reform movement has carried us Jews right into the heart of modern life, and we are as deeply and vitally affected by its pulsations as are other churches and religions. The old isolation is a thing of the past for the reformed Jew, as he freely avows and as is demonstrated by his readiness to join all honest workers for the elevation of mankind and the betterment of human life. Reform is not to sink to a mere badge marking off one body of religious people from another, but otherwise meaningless to its bearers. It is to remain a principle of life, a spur to timely action, a perpetual admonition to keep abreast, on our own native ground, with the best thought of our time. Reform as an article of our creed not only justifies the past action, but is our watchword for future work. The oldest and most severely tried of all the churches feels in her veins the youngest and freshest life-blood of the present. A reformer once shall mean a reformer always. Thus we hope to forestall

the necessity of offering concessions after the mischief has been done, caused by the refusal to listen to the just demands of the time in due season.

But for the orthodox Jew also the old isolation is passed. He cannot longer be, nor does he desire to be, exactly what his forefathers were. In that sense all Jews living within the influence of modern civilization are reformed Jews, no matter how strictly they may adhere to the old ceremonialism. Nay, even beyond the apparent zone of this influence, even in darkest Russia, there are many thousands of them who are acquainted with and have fully mastered the problems that occupy the highest intellectual life of our time. With their faces still buried in their rabbinical tomes, their minds ascend to the highest regions of metaphysical speculation. Under their ungainly exterior and lingual barbarism, the inner man is often as marked a product of our own day as is the most pronounced reformer.

If we Jews have so far been spared the affliction of a new church, it has not been due to our clearer insight or wiser foresight. We owe it in the first place to the peculiar nature of the old faith, and in the second to the causes that led to the movement for reform.

Judaism is not a church in the Christian acceptance of that term. It is not a spiritual community founded upon a technical creed and armed with powers not to be found elsewhere. It does not claim to be the appointed guardian of "the means of grace," on the correct and faithful dispensation of which depends the salvation of the human soul. Judaism entered history in the form of a "nation," bound together by a religious thought. This thought was expressed in the form of a "covenant with God," by which the nation was set apart and charged, in its totality, with a peculiar mission. It is not a matter of choice with the individual whether or not he should enter into this compact; he was born into it. As a native of the "House of Israel," he is entitled to all its rights and privileges, and charged with all its duties. "House of Israel" is the historic name for the Jewish church. One is master in the household—God, the One, Invisible and Indivisible; and one rule obtains for all its members,

viz., his will as revealed in his law. In the ancient land of this vast household he had his sanctuary, his orders of priests and Levites, founded also on birthright, his seers and prophets who declared his purposes and foretold his judgments. These visible signs of the "House of Israel" have long since disappeared; but their ideas have remained, and outlasted all the misfortunes and trials of the scattered nation. A Jew may or may not belong to a congregation, just as he pleases; if only he owns allegiance to the covenant with God—in other words, considers himself a Jew—no man has the right to question his position. His submission is due to the Law only; and the Law is an open book which the Jew is even bound to study every day of his life. He is responsible to no human tribunal for his sins. Knowing the true way of repentance, he does not go in quest of any other atonement.

The "ancient faith" never had an authorized creed, and no serious attempt was ever made to impose one upon it. Hence any demand for reform is, so to speak, a domestic matter, and is always, as in all self-respecting families, settled at home. The most radical reformer repudiates separation, and not rarely gives stronger proofs of his fealty than the zealot who will not depart from the old paths even to a hair's breadth. Judaism is a religious democracy, a people's church in the broadest sense of the word. The *ecclesia oppressa* of the world guarantees to her members the fullest measure of individual liberty.

The absence of a priestly order saved the reform movement from the opposition which imperiled authority and class interest naturally show toward innovations. The rabbi is not a member of an organized class, and his ordination carries with it no special and formal consecration. He has been aptly called "the expert on matters religious;" he is a "master in Israel" to the measure in which he himself has mastered the field of his activity and is able to dispense the light and knowledge that he has acquired. The small modicum of authority that the rabbinical law accords to him he can increase only by the weight of his personality and by the confidence that he can instil into the hearts of his people. In this respect the Jewish reformation has widened rather than

restricted the influence of the rabbi. It has called him out of his study, and has set him face to face with his own people in full view of the outside world. It has created opportunities for him to minister to the religious life of the members of his congregation in their homes, and to be a leader in all kinds of work for the relief of the poor and the instruction of the ignorant. It has imposed upon him the duty of representing his church on all occasions in which the Jews participate. In the school of life he has learned the great lesson of toleration, not only toward men of different creeds or of no creed at all, but, what is harder to carry out, toward those of his own faith who differ from him in theory or practice. There is no ground for sectarianism in the House of Israel, and those who hanker after apostleship of a new revelation must go outside for it.

The other cause that favored the reform movement was the fact that it was contemporaneous with the social reformation which began for the Jews of western Europe in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and formed an integral part of it. The question was not of mending a creed, but of supplying a need; not of that dogmatic salvation which, as Paul says, is "of the Jews," but for the Jews, and not for the world to come, but for the world that now is. It came as "a historic necessity" which "leads the willing and draws the unwilling;" and the Jews were surely willing to be led forth from the wretched conditions in which they had found themselves. The clear-sighted understood that, if the better time was to come, it must find the Jew equipped for his new duties and privileges, civic and social. But his religion was so closely woven into his daily life that this could not be done without raising the question as to the validity of the restrictions that it imposed. The right to live according to his Law had been bought at such a fearful price that the least custom of the fathers bore in the eyes of the faithful the sanctity of a divine ordinance. Ceremonialism had so enveloped and overgrown the spiritual part of Judaism that it was natural to doubt whether the latter could survive the downfall of the former. It was not a theoretical, but a practical problem, which many solved for themselves without asking permission of the rabbi. By

and by the conflict reached the synagogue itself; its ritual ceased to edify large portions of the people, and a reform was clearly needed if these were not to be entirely estranged from the community. The old unquestioning faith gave way in many points to the more liberal ideas which schools and universities began to dispense for the Hebrew youth, and which were eagerly sought and accepted by them.

Once admitted into the synagogue, the germs of the new ideas fell upon a fruitful soil, and their growth was favored by the independence which the congregations have at all times enjoyed among the Jews. This is the reason why the reformation was not noticed so much by outsiders. No violent upheavals or clashes of arms signalized its appearance. The movement did not begin in districts where the Jews are massed in large numbers, as in Russia, Poland, and Austria, but in Germany, where they are settled in groups of moderate sizes, scattered over wide areas, and without any ecclesiastical organization to link them together. It was therefore possible, and it frequently happened, that conflicts which divided one body left the rest undisturbed.

Besides, although the Jews had dwelt in some of the oldest cities of Germany longer than their Christian inhabitants, they were still treated as aliens in the middle of the eighteenth century. They had no rights but such as they could buy with money; and even this privilege was sometimes denied them. What human power could they invoke to plead their cause or avenge their wrongs? And if they were shamefully treated in regard to their civic rights, their religion was held below contempt. On it was heaped all the opprobrium which the combined greed of the state and the arrogance of the church could invent. Its very existence was considered a crime. The psalmist's prayer, "I shall not die, but live to make known the works of God," was on the lips of the Jew an inspiration of the devil, the original sin (*Erbsünde*) of Israel. That there could be any element of truth in their religion, any vein of real piety, anything worth preserving or even knowing—such a thought never entered the minds of the rulers. So the Jews were left to themselves and not molested so long as the sound of their

disputes did not disturb the public peace and so long as they paid their taxes ungrudgingly.

Among themselves the waves of controversies often ran high, and partook of the acrimony which we are accustomed to in theological contests. Combinations of differing communities were formed; even ban and excommunication were resorted to. But the ecclesiastical thunder had lost its terrors, and its bolts fell harmless at the feet of the intended victims. All this is a matter of past history now, and among the best of all the reforms that have been achieved is the mutual forbearance which the orthodox and the progressive sides of Judaism show to one another.

The reformation may be called German-Jewish; for it was begun and carried on during the first century of its life in that country, and in contiguous countries where German Jews had settled or whither their writings had penetrated. There the literary battles were fought, translations of the Bible with popular commentaries published, and the first revised liturgies introduced. There schools for the religious training of children on the principles of modern pedagogy were devised, and the necessary catechisms, manuals of biblical history, hymn-books, etc., were provided. It was in Germany that the sermon was introduced as a stated part of public worship; and the newly created pulpits were filled with men who were masters of the spoken word and competent expounders of Judaism, both in its traditional and in its modern conception. There also a number of conferences in the interest of the reformation were held; seminaries were founded for the training of rabbis who would answer the demands of the new era, and there the Jewish literature of the nineteenth century was created.

Finally, and above all, it was in Germany that the history of the scattered race was first presented to the world in the manner of modern historiography. This was a gigantic task; for the material therefor had not only to be collected from the vast religious libraries of the Jews themselves, but also unearthed from the archives of Christian churches, monasteries, ecclesiastical and civil courts, extending over many centuries. For the

Jews had had no historian of their own since Josephus, and his name was a hissing and a by-word with them, as "the Roman slave." "Noch in den ersten Jahrzehnten dieses Jahrhunderts war selbst die Geschichte der Schicksale und Thätigkeiten der Juden während der zwei Jahrtausende der Zerstreung ein unbekanntes Feld," says Dr. Jost in the preface to his great work on the history of Judaism (1857). The wonderful success with which that field has been cultivated has been of great moment to the reformation, for it showed clearly that Judaism did not descend from heaven as a complete system which is above changes and chances of time and place; but that, like all other historic religions, it is a growth that has passed through various stages, and has been vitally affected by the beliefs and philosophical conceptions with which it came into contact.

The weight of that historical teaching was greatly increased by the dissemination of the Bible, the *Urgeschichte* of Israel; for in it the voice of the Hebrew seers was heard again by the people, and the proclamation that the essential part of religion is spiritual and not ceremonial was again brought home to their minds.

In this way the movement spread and gained in strength; it was further favored by the outburst of general liberalism all over Germany for which the year 1848 is famous. All things seemed to augur well for the future development of the new ideas, and the minds of the leaders of the reformation were filled with high hopes and energy. But a period of political reaction set in which was bent upon wiping out every trace of the "iniquities" of 1848; culminating in the Bismarck era with its succession of wars. The reconstruction of the German empire meant war upon the Jews and the relapse of Teutonic Christendom into the intolerance of the Middle Ages.

This disappointment was the more galling as the Jews had been eager to take their places in the armies of the Fatherland, and had sealed their patriotism with their blood. It sank to downright despair when thousands of fugitives from Russia, driven with their wives and children from their homes, appeared in 1882 on the German frontiers, and implored their German

kindred to help them to a resting-place for their weary feet. So absorbing was this appalling task that mere ideal aims and endeavors had to be cast aside. The duties of the hour involved questions of life and death to hosts of unfortunate people, and left no room for purposes that require safety, peace, and leisure for their cultivation. And this state of affairs has continued up to the present time; in fact, it may even be said to have grown worse. Instead of devoting themselves to religious progress, the German Jews have had to buckle on their old armor of defense, and try to repel the attacks of enemies that encompass them on every side; France leading in the van with the Dreyfus persecution and the Algiers riots.

We are no longer *wundergläubig*, as were our fathers in their generations; but sometimes it is hard to be consistently enlightened and rationalistic. The new ideas were not lost, in spite of the hard setback they had received in the land of their birth. Unobserved and undreamed of by its leaders, a new home beyond the seas had been prepared for their safety. Since the middle of the last century a class of young Jews, that had been touched by the new spirit, had immigrated into this country. Though not men of learning or of higher education, they had a sufficiently clear understanding of the ideas promulgated by the advocates of reform in their native land. These pioneers, though poor in worldly goods, and, in most cases, compelled to begin at the foot of the social ladder, had on their side pluck and the inherited virtues of their race. They had left on the other side of the Atlantic parents and families, who looked to them for better times to come. This never-failing spur in the Jewish heart led the newcomers into the wild regions that were then first yielding to the magic touch of American civilization. Wherever these men had gained a foothold in sufficient numbers they formed themselves into congregations. They waited for no rabbi to help them, and asked for no permission from anyone; they merely exercised their rights as members of "the House of Israel." With scanty membership and scantier resources, they formed the nucleus of almost all the large and representative reform congregations that exist today. They

boldly called their places of worship "temples" rather than synagogues—a change that had been begun, though only tentatively, in Germany.

Immigration gradually swelled the ranks of the reformed congregations, and emboldened them to invite competent preachers from the old home to fill their pulpits. The worldly prospects offered to these men were by no means tempting; but the positions were endowed with one priceless boon: freedom from all state interference which came with the era of reaction, and from the yoke of prescriptive rights which proved so great a hindrance to progress in Germany. It was this feature that induced some of the leading spirits in the movement to accept the calls extended to them by the rising congregations of the New World. Among them were men of learning and ability, whose acknowledged standing as preachers and organizers proved of great value to the work of the reformation. Most of these men were, however, too far advanced in life to attempt the acquirement of a foreign tongue as the medium of their ministrations; nor was there any need of it at that time, since their flocks still clung to the mother-tongue in home life and in public worship. The first revised liturgies, the first school manuals, the first weekly and monthly papers were all in German. Thus we witness the curious spectacle of a movement, bodily transplanted thousands of miles from the place of its birth and first development, not only continuing its life, but even gradually assuming the leadership and opening up new fields of growth and activity.

That initial stage is now past; the few pioneers that still survive have been transformed into full Americans. Rank and file, both within and without the pulpit, are as to the American manner born, and, with few exceptions, English by the side of the ancient Hebrew is at present used as the vernacular of the reformed Jewish worship.

If we now inquire how the reform movement has fared under this change, and what record of vitality and efficiency it has made, these few facts will suffice for an answer:

In every large city of the United States are to be found

temples of the modern type, some of them being the religious homes of large bodies of Israelites, and the centers of much activity in the fields of charity and education. Even in the smaller towns, wherever the number of Jews is sufficient to maintain a congregation, there are houses of worship of the same character. Since 1873 most of them are joined together in a "Union of American Hebrew Congregations," founded chiefly for the purpose of maintaining a theological college for the training of native rabbis. As shown by the name adopted, this union is non-sectarian within Jewish lines. It is not paled in by any creed or standard of worship. Its doors are open to any congregation willing to range itself under the general designation of Hebrew; and no supervision of the internal affairs of any of its constituent bodies has ever been attempted. Practically, however, the union is the rallying-point of the reform element of the country, and numbers now 150 members. Although its primary object is the support of the college, other matters of general interest have at times come before its annual meetings. No similar organization based upon the broadest principles of individual liberty exists anywhere in Jewry.

The Hebrew Union College was opened in 1875 in Cincinnati, where it is still located. Its faculty consists of ten members, and the average attendance of students is sixty-five. More than sixty of its former pupils are now preaching reformed Judaism throughout the length and breadth of the county—a fair showing, surely, when we consider that it is an eight-year course through which the students have to pass before receiving their ordination.

After some minor attempts at a ministerial organization, the Central Conference of American Rabbis was organized in 1889. Its last published report shows a membership of 150. Of its practical usefulness it has given proof in the publication of the union prayerbook and the union hymnal, both works having been adopted in over one hundred congregations. The language employed in both is chiefly the English; only the old landmarks of the traditional liturgies, with their classical expressions of Jewish faith and hope, are given in Hebrew, with a paraphrase

in the vernacular by their side. Yet even in these some pruning had to be done to enable the worshiper of today to join in their use without mental reservation. An important and extensive part of the prayerbook is devoted to an entirely new selection of pericopes for sabbaths, festivals, and memorial days, embodying the loftiest utterances of the ancient prophets, priests, and sages. The framers of the new liturgies were guided in this part of their work by the conviction that the safest way to religious and ethical progress for the Jew lies in the field of his oldest reminiscences; that, in the words of George Eliot, "our finest hope is our finest memory."

Should anyone desire to know more of the latest development of the ancient faith—and I trust that there be such—let him secure copies of these books, and examine them with such fairness as an honest believer in one church can bring to bear upon an inquiry into the belief of another. For, in addition to adaptations and paraphrases of the old formulas, he will find there prayers and meditations of modern authorship, in which the ideals and aspirations of the Judaism of today are freely and fully expressed. Thus he may learn from the best authority how far the reformed Jew is in touch with the *Zeitgeist*; how much of the old leaven still clings to him; and how he reconciles such concepts as "the chosen people," or "God's covenant with Israel," or "the messianic mission" with the larger views that he professes elsewhere in regard to things human and divine.

In the hymnal one will in all likelihood be surprised to notice the free use which the compilers have made of non-Jewish poetry, and of tunes and anthems by non-Jewish composers; wherein he will, as we do, get a foretaste of that community of saints of all creeds and churches hoped and prayed for by all truly God-inspired souls.

Other essential departures from long-established customs have by this time become essential features of the temple service, and have indeed begun to assume something of the sanctity of inviolable ordinances. The grandchildren of those dear old folks who had to be reasoned and sometimes gently coerced

into the propriety of uncovering their heads during worship now regard the older custom as an intolerable want of reverence. Through all the long centuries our people maintained the oriental custom of the separation of the sexes in the synagogue ; and it is still religiously observed by the immovables as well as by the timid and half-hearted reformers. In America, however, the eastern fashion has been resolutely set aside as inconsistent with our social habits. The introduction of family pews, stoutly resisted at first, has already ceased to have any weight with the unreformed Jew as an objection to his taking part in the revised service.

Prior to these new departures, however, another and far more important step in the life of the daughters of Israel had been taken in the schoolroom. Under the old system religious instruction was intended for boys and young men only. The nurture of the female soul was held to be sufficiently secured by the home life conducted after the Hebrew fashion. But when this safeguard began to give way, and the general education of girls was placed on a level with that of boys, an entire change in the system of religious training became necessary, and the congregational schools opened their doors to girls also. In no improvement has the reformation been more successful than in this particular one. To appreciate it the Christian reader must be advised that the Jewish religious schools are not intended for the children of the unchurched masses, for whom ample provision is made in other ways. The schools are conducted for the children of the church members. Great care and a considerable portion of the temple's revenue are bestowed on them. The teaching follows a graduated plan extending over a period of four or five years. It comprises Bible history, geography of Palestine, as much of Jewish antiquities as is indispensable for the intelligent reading of the Scriptures, the post-biblical history of the Jews, religion proper, ethics, and the explanation of the festivals and of such ceremonies as are still observed in the reformed service. As a rule, each class is engaged in some special kind of helpful service for the children of the poor, thus ingraining into their minds the idea that doing good is part and parcel of their religion.

The crowning event of the pupil's school life is the confirmation with which it closes. This is celebrated on the Feast of Weeks, the original of the Christian Pentecost. In the Mosaic law it is a thanksgiving day for the first harvest; but the Pharisees endowed it with a deeper significance by making it the memorial season of the revelation on Sinai and of the consecration of Israel to the mission symbolized in the idea of the covenant with God. First harvests and second harvests, and all the other joys of husbandry in the ancient seats of the Hebrews, have long since been torn from the devoted nation, and the pristine gladness of the feast has been turned into a sad memory of the beautiful days of the past. But the spiritual significance to which the Pharisees raised the true Pentecost has remained in the hearts of Israel, and to this day it is for us above all "the time of the bestowal of the law." In the Middle Ages the *divina commedia* enacted at Sinai inspired the poets to the sublimest outpouring of their souls; and now the initiative of the modern disciples of the Pharisees, the reformers, has made it the most gladsome season of the whole church year. On that day the house of God is arrayed in the brightest colors with which the flowers, nature's favorite children, can adorn an earthly habitation; and the children of Israel are greeted with songs and the sound of instruments as they appear in festal procession. Thus they are led up to the shrine "where there is nothing but the testimony," that they may renew the vows of Sinai, and become responsible members of the covenant. With appropriate ceremonies—in the choice of which the rabbi is free, as there are no precedents to bind him—the postulants reiterate the standard formulas of the Jewish faith, declare their acceptance of them, and promise to order their future life in accordance with them. After receiving the benediction in the venerable form of the "laying on of hands" by the rabbi, they are bidden to go to their parents who are present and ask for their blessing in the presence of the congregation; an act which never fails to touch all hearts to the quick, and to open the deeper springs of religious feeling. It may be fitly called the annual revival meeting of the Jewish church. The afternoon is

given over to family rejoicing at the happy event. That the poor are not forgotten goes without saying; and for many of them the same confirmation joy is provided through the thoughtfulness of the well-to-do families.

When I said that there was no precedent for the annual act of confirmation, I meant that there was none for it in its present form of an annual ceremony for both sexes. The germ of the rite is ancient, and it is a home growth. In the theological system of the Pharisees full religious accountability begins for boys with the thirteenth and for girls with the twelfth year. Up to that age the parents are co-respondents before the divine tribunal for every transgression of their children. No special act or ceremony marks the transition in the life of the girl; but the boy appears at the morning service on the sabbath following his thirteenth birthday, and is invited to pronounce publicly the benediction in which God is praised, with thanksgiving "for having chosen Israel from among all nations to be the recipients and guardians of the *torah* and thereby planted eternal life within us." He either reads himself or, if not advanced enough, has read for him in the original Hebrew part of the pericope for the day, and is then considered a *Bar Mizvah*, self-accountable for the observance of the commandments enjoined by the divine Lawgiver. The day is also an occasion for family rejoicing and merciful remembrance of the poor and needy. This formal public acknowledgment was not, however, essential, neither was the consent or participation of a rabbi required. The thirteenth birthday carries with it the rights and privileges of the boy's religious majority.

I have dwelt upon these details because the confirmation is an instructive instance of the manner in which the reform movement endeavors to preserve and vitalize such of the inherited forms and ideas as lend themselves to the process of revival and prove acceptable to the people. The entire service has been treated in the same manner, including the rituals for marriage and burial. I shall mention only one other innovation, since it is distinctively American; and that is the introduction of weekly lectures in addition to the sermon on sabbath mornings. They

are given, as a rule, on the eve of the sabbath, or in some places on Sunday mornings. They afford to the rabbi an opportunity to discuss before his people subjects of a much wider range than can be fittingly treated in a sermon as part of the public service. These lectures bring to the house of God that large class of merchants and working people who are either unable or unwilling to sacrifice one of the six days which the civil law permits them to devote to their business. For that reason they deserve recognition and credit; and the rabbi is entitled to the gratitude of his people for the labor which this double task imposes upon him. But it needs no argument to show that an hour's attendance at worship on Friday evening or on Sunday morning does not compensate for the total loss of the sabbath, and, especially, for the loss of its influence upon Jewish home life. This is one of the problems of the future. To adopt the first day of the week as the religious day of rest is a solution to which most of the progressive congregations do not take kindly. Their reluctance is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that the sabbath is one of the strongest ties between the Jews of every land, and that the change of the day of worship was the first public act by which the rising Christian church repudiated her connection with her Jewish mother church.

I hope that it will be seen from what has been said that the Jewish reformation is a movement strictly within the lines of the Jewish community, and shows no tendency toward the forming of an independent organization. On the contrary, it has done much to strengthen, and even to revive, the sense of the religious and racial unity of Israel; and, in addition, has freed that feeling from the narrowness and bitterness which ages of persecution had instilled into it. The movement lays the greatest stress upon the spiritual mission of Israel in the service of mankind; an ideal that swelled the bosoms of the ancient seers and inspired their sublime presentations of the messianic time. That mission consists in the spread of the knowledge of the true God and the proclamation of an era of universal peace and goodwill among all the nations of the earth. In claiming the right,

and putting it resolutely into practice, of dealing with ceremonies as time and conditions require, and of widening and rationalizing the spiritual foundations of the old faith, the advocates of the reformation feel themselves in line with the past history of Judaism. They are no dissenters from a church "as established by law," who rebelled for soul liberty against an arrogated dictatorship. The Jewish reformer holds the ancient masters and teachers of traditionalism in the highest veneration. He does not hesitate to go among their living followers to dispense the word of God whenever asked to do so, and with no view of conversion or propaganda. In our great charities all over the land, as in our fraternities and humane societies, men and women work together forgetful of all theological distinctions, and welcome even those who think that they can lead good and pure lives and remain faithful Jews without affiliation to synagogue or temple. The objects of their loving solicitude are mostly people of the orthodox stamp; but everything is so arranged as not to offend the conscience of the—dare we call them so?—"weaker" brethren and sisters. Of a truth, "stronger" would be more appropriate; for these afflicted burden-bearers glory in the bonds which they believe the hand of God has put around them; glory in the "yoke of the law" amidst the toils and privations they endure all the days of their lives.

By thus forestalling any serious breach in the house of Israel, the leaders of the reformation have insured its influence upon much wider circles than are indicated by the congregations that have adopted its principles. Working in unison with the best tendencies of our times, and having testified their devotion to the Jewish cause beyond cavil, the reformation is silently penetrating into the very strongholds of orthodoxy; nay, it is reaching the ancient home of the faith itself. For that strange yearning for its soil which has been stirred up in thousands of hearts during the last thirty years, despite the thundering protests from both sides of the house, has brought to Palestine a Jewish population which does not go there simply to pray at "the wall of wailing" and to be buried in holy soil; it goes to begin a new life of greater hope than some Christian

governments permit them to lead. They are still *altgläubig*; but they are thoroughly modern-minded, as the twenty or more colonies founded by them prove. They have put their hands to the plow; they plant vineyards and olive groves; they have resuscitated the Hebrew as the vernacular of their villages; and they have founded schools for their children on patterns which sufficiently show that they are true reformers, *i. e.*, improvers of the right kind. The movement is called Zionism—an inadequate, even misleading, name. For, whether the temple be rebuilt upon its old foundations or not, it does not touch the inner heart of the question; nay, the supreme question is: whether the time has come to secure a safe refuge for the race, whose sufferings seem to be increasing rather than tending to their end; and this is a problem to which the Jewish reformation cannot close its eyes without becoming faithless to its own professions.